

## Robert Walker, Road Warrior

Robert Walker was the consummate road warrior. A decade out of college, but still single, his job as a salesman required him to spend his days traveling the country, making his pitch before assembled audiences of respected businessmen. Robert had never been one to get too attached to any place or person, he enjoyed the life on the road, remaking himself in every new location.

Since he had no one to come home to, he threw himself into his work, volunteering to take more and more days on the road, until the road itself became his home. Every place he went looked the same after all: the same white airports, the same chain stores, the same business types in the same suits. He felt he was getting to know “the neighborhood” and developed a routine: Wake up at the Westin in the morning, grab a coffee at Starbucks, head to the office to make a pitch, grab lunch at a Cheesecake Factory or a Chili’s, do another pitch at an office, then catch a plane to the next Westin.

Chain culture became his culture. Aside from the commute by airplane, it could easily pass for just another job. He eventually let the lease on his apartment lapse, his suitcase becoming his only possessions. Soon he got rid of that too, adding the task of picking up a new pair of clothes as Banana Republic to his nighttime rituals. He felt freer, knowing that no matter where he went, the world would provide him with all his favorite things. All he had to do was show his credit card.

He realized the credit card was the only part of the wallet he was using — it got him his e-tickets at the airport, paid for his clothing and his meals, reserved the room at his hotels — so he chucked the rest of the wallet and carried only that. He decided to chuck his cell phone too — he had the head office call him every morning to tell him where he was to pitch to next.

Now he truly felt alive. A man with a card — that was all he was — yet the world bowed before him, ministering to his every want. The people he interacted with started to seem different to him. No longer were they simply service workers, doing their job to get their pay. Now they seemed like *servants*, bowing before him in obeisance to his power. “Have a nice flight, Mr. Parker”, “Enjoy your meal!”, “Thank you, sir” — it all now sounded like genuine emotion to him. It sounded like love.

Yes, that was it, he decided. The world had finally come to love him. The parents who never supported him, the girls who’d quickly abandoned him, the friends who were never there for him — well, he now had the last laugh. The world now catered to his every whim, fitting his desires like a well-tailored glove. And all he had to do to get it? He simply had to train himself to want what it provided.

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